



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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13 November 1978

Mr. Sidney Hurlburt
Editor
Burlington Free Press
191 College Street
Burlington, Vermont 05401

Dear Sir:

I have just seen your editorial of 13 October, "CIA's Unrelenting Arrogance."

Providing your readers with editorial judgments which they trust and believe is an awesome responsibility. To provide such judgments based on false information without any attempt to verify your facts is faulty journalism at best. To provide such judgments based on ignorance of the facts is frightening. In your editorial of the 13th you have accomplished both.

Based on a story in the Wilmington Journal--like the Free Press a Gannett newspaper--you report that five CIA officials have put pressure on the Maryland State Police to drop the investigation into the death of a former CIA employee and consultant. A call to my office or to the Maryland State Police would have provided you with the information that the charge made by the Wilmington Journal was utterly irresponsible and ridiculous. If you did not believe my answer you could have had the decency to call me a liar in print.

In closing your editorial you demand the President and the Congress to hold the CIA accountable for its deeds and to impose severe restrictions to assure the American people and others that it (the CIA) will not overstep its bounds again.

Where have you been?

In January of this year President Carter signed Executive Order 12036, "United States Intelligence Activities" which spells out in great detail what the CIA can and cannot do. Some 18 months ago the President created

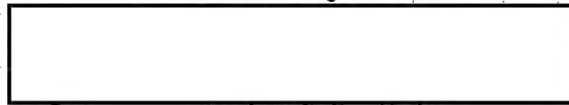
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the Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB) whose only mission is to look over and into the activities of this country's intelligence apparatus. Both Houses of Congress have created committees for precisely the same purposes--the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (19 May 1976) and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (14 July 1977). Both committees are now working on Charter Legislation to provide laws to direct and limit our intelligence activities.

Should the Burlington Free Press, the Wilmington Journal or anyone else have evidence, information or suspicion of any wrongdoing or impropriety by the CIA in the case of the investigation being undertaken by the Maryland State Police--or in any other activity involving the CIA--I urge you to make your information known to the IOB and to the two Intelligence Committees in the Congress. I can assure you that your charges will be fully investigated.

I also urge you in fairness to your readers to have the courage to print this response. Those in the CIA who work for the citizens of the United States in a thankless and often dangerous profession are deeply hurt by your groundless charges. It is you who have an unrelenting arrogance.

Sincerely,



Herbert E. Hetu
Director of Public Affairs

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BURLINGTON FREE PRESS (VT.)

13 October 1978

CIA's Unrelenting Arrogance

IN THE NAME of national security, the Central Intelligence Agency has trampled on the rights of many American citizens and has often exceeded the limits of its authority in conducting clandestine activities in other countries.

Recent revelations have indicated that the nation's intelligence apparatus has operated much too close to the line that sets off the legal from the illegal in numerous instances here and abroad.

What has shocked many people in this country has been the fact that the CIA apparently has been accorded a status that puts it above the laws that others must obey.

After being chided by Congress for some of its sinister undertakings, the CIA could have been appropriately contrite by toning down its aggressive behavior toward its countrymen.

Not so.

In the latest scandal, the Wilmington (Del.) News Journal — like the Free Press a Gannett newspaper — broke the story that five CIA officials have put pressure on the Maryland State Police to drop a murder investigation in the case of an agency consultant whose weighted body was found floating in Chesapeake Bay. "For reasons of national security," they have asked Maryland State Police Superintendent Thomas S. Smith to rule that the death of John Arthur Paisley was a

suicide. The dead man had retired in 1974 as deputy director of the CIA's Office of Strategic Research but had continued to serve as a consultant.

Maryland authorities launched their investigation because of the peculiar circumstances of his death.

That the CIA now is putting pressure on them to drop the investigation on vague grounds is reprehensible and unconscionable. Such a demand indicates that the CIA has not changed; its officials are as arrogant and confident as they ever were. And they apparently operate with impunity in the eyes of the administration.

There is a need for a credible intelligence agency in this country. Because CIA officials are either unwilling or unable to curb their appetite for absolute power, questions must be raised about the agency's ability to fulfill its obligations as an intelligence gatherer.

Steps must be taken to guarantee that it does not exceed its authority here or abroad. If President Carter will not take the initiative in holding the agency accountable for its deeds, Congress should impose severe restrictions on its powers to assure the American people and others that it will not overstep its bounds again.